

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF NEW MEXICO**

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Plaintiff,

v.

HERIBERTO SALAZAR AMAYA, et al.

Defendant.

Case No. 1:25-CR-0879-JB-1

Hon. James O. Browning
Pete V. Domenici United States
Courthouse
333 Lomas Blvd NW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

**DECLARATION OF MICHAEL V. SEVERO
IN SUPPORT OF
MOTION FOR SUBSTITUTION OF COUNSEL**

I, MICHAEL V. SEVERO, do hereby declare as follows:

1. I am an attorney at law duly licensed to practice before all courts in the State of California since 1976.
2. I am admitted to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court, the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Sixth and Ninth Circuits, all four district courts in the State of California, the Eastern District of Michigan, Western District of Michigan, the District of Nebraska, and the Eastern District of Wisconsin, and most recently in this district. Also, I have been admitted to practice *pro hac vice* in the Districts of Arizona, Delaware, Southern District of Florida, Idaho, Northern District of Illinois (twice), Southern District of Indiana, Eastern District of Kentucky,

Western District of New York, Northern District of Ohio, Eastern District of Pennsylvania, Northern District of Texas, Western District of Texas, Western District of Washington, and twice in the Eastern District of Washington.

3. In this district, I was previously admitted to practice *pro hac vice*, in *U.S. v. Ferdman (Cohen)*, 12-cr-411 JB-4. This time, I chose to seek admission given the possibility that I may be asked to appear in other cases.

4. I offer this declaration in support of defendant's motion to substitute me as counsel on his behalf. In this respect, I have referred to this court's order taking the motion under advisement. This declaration is offered to address the court's concerns.

5. In this case, I was asked to represent Mr. Salazar Amaya by members of his family. I was informed by his family that he had spoken with them and that he wished to have me represent him.

6. I sought to get a phone conference with defendant at Cibola County Correctional Center (Cibola). It took several days but on June 6, 2025, at approximately 12:30 p.m., I received a call from Mr. Salazar Amaya from Cibola.

7. During that phone conversation, Mr. Salazar Amaya expressed to me his desire to have me represent him in this case.

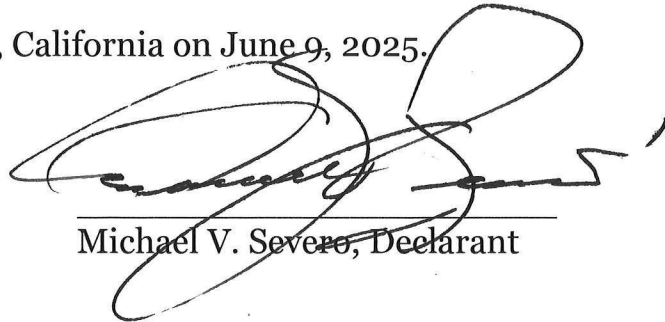
8. On this date, I spoke with counsel of record, Brock Benjamin, Esq. He informed me that he has sought a phone conference with Mr. Salazar Amaya but has not yet spoken to him. Mr. Benjamin does not oppose the instant motion and in fact has filed a response fully in support thereof. See Docket No. 200.

9. In my over 48 years of practice, I have very often been involved in situations where a defendant is appointed counsel at first only to have retained counsel substitute in at a later date. This is particularly true in out-of-district cases where the defendant has no means of communication with his/her family and needs the assistance of counsel.

10. I can assure this court that I would not seek to represent a defendant in a criminal case if I was not fully authorized by that individual to do so.

11. I remain ready to answer any other inquiries by this court.

I declare under penalty of perjury that this declaration is true and correct and that it was executed at Pasadena, California on June 9, 2025.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael V. Severo", is written over a horizontal line. The signature is stylized with large loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Michael V. Severo, Declarant